



# Severe Weather Awareness Week

## April 5-9, 2010



### Family Preparedness

### Friday April 9, 2010

Disasters of all kinds disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Each disaster has lasting effects, both to people and property. If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help you, but you need to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere. Being prepared for a disaster can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters.

*Courtesy: FEMA*

#### **KEY ELEMENTS OF A DISASTER PLAN:**

There are five key elements to a disaster plan:

- 1) Learn about possible dangers in your area and become familiar with your community's disaster response plan. Common disasters in Iowa include flooding, severe thunderstorms and tornadoes.
- 2) Talk to your family about what to do in the event of an emergency. Pick two locations where you will meet: one close to your home and another removed from your neighborhood to be used if you are unable to return to your residence.
- 3) Develop a crisis communications plan to insure that your family will be able to stay in contact if you are separated during a disaster.
- 4) Create emergency preparedness kits for your home, office and car.
- 5) Practice your plan!



## **ASSEMBLE A DISASTER KIT**

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of a disaster. An effective disaster kit contains enough food, water and other supplies for each person to last three days. Here is a basic list of items to include in a kit:

- ❑ Food and water
- ❑ Battery or hand crank operated radio
- ❑ Flash light and extra batteries
- ❑ First aid supplies
- ❑ Clothing, shoes and blankets
- ❑ Whistle
- ❑ Cash and coins
- ❑ Photocopies of important family documents such as ID's and credit cards
- ❑ Baby needs
- ❑ Sanitation items such as hand sanitizer and toilet paper
- ❑ Specialty items such as prescription medications and eyeglasses
- ❑ Games to pass the time



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### **WATER**

Store at least one gallon of water per person per day. To prepare the safest and most reliable emergency supply of water, it is recommended you purchase commercially bottled water. Be sure to keep water in its original container and do not open it until you use it. Always observe the expiration or "use by" date on bottled water. Use and replace the water before this date.

### **FOOD**

Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little to no water. Be sure to include a manual can opener in your disaster kit. Here are some ideas for foods to include:

- ❑ Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- ❑ Canned juices, milk or soup
- ❑ Staples: sugar, salt, pepper
- ❑ High energy foods: peanut butter, jelly, salt-free crackers, granola bars, trail mix
- ❑ Cookies, hard candy, instant coffee, tea bags
- ❑ Vitamins
- ❑ Foods for infants, elderly persons or other persons with special dietary needs

## FIRST AID

A good first aid kit is essential to any home, and is imperative in any disaster supply kit. Here are some items which should be included in any first aid kit. This is not an exhaustive list.

- ❑ Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- ❑ 2-inch and 4-inch sterile gauze pads
- ❑ Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- ❑ Scissors and tweezers
- ❑ Antiseptic and anti-bacterial ointment
- ❑ Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
- ❑ Cleansing agent/soap
- ❑ Latex gloves
- ❑ Sunscreen
- ❑ Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever
- ❑ Anti-diarrhea medication

## DEVELOP A FAMILY EVACUATION PLAN

Evacuations are more common than people realize. Hundreds of times each year, transportation and industrial accidents release harmful substances, forcing thousands of people to leave their homes. Fire and floods cause evacuations even more frequently.

Tips for a good evacuation plan:

- ❑ Plan routes from your residence to a safe location.
- ❑ Plan for what you would need to take with you should you need to leave your home for an unknown period of time.
- ❑ Ensure all family members know where to go should you become separated.
- ❑ Radio messages will inform you of specific routes and shelter areas should a major incident occur.



If you should be evacuated, it is important to follow recommended evacuation routes, do not take shortcuts as they may be blocked. Be alert for washed-out roads and bridges and downed power lines. If you have time, be sure to secure your home before leaving and let others know where you are going.

## **DON'T FORGET PETS**

If you are like millions of animal owners nationwide, your pet is an important member of your family, so make plans for your pets too! For public health reasons, most shelters do not accept pets. Prepare a list of kennels, friends and family members who may be able to care for your pet in an emergency. Pack an emergency kit for your pets as well. The kit



should include a supply of pet food, water, medications, veterinary records and items like cat litter. Make sure identification tags are up to date and securely fastened to your pet's collar. It is also a good idea to have a photograph of you and your pet as this can establish ownership if your pet is lost.

## **PREPARE YOUR HOME**

There are numerous steps you can take in and around your home to help limit the damage done by severe weather. Consider taking the following actions before severe weather blows through town:

### **FLOODING:**

- ❑ Elevate the furnace, water heater and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- ❑ Consider installing sewer backflow valves.
- ❑ Add waterproof veneer to exterior walls.



### **THUNDERSTORMS AND STRONG WINDS:**

- ❑ Remove dead or rotting tree branches that could fall and cause injury or damage.
- ❑ Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- ❑ Shutter windows and secure outside doors.